

17 February 2009

***The Satirical Eye: comedy and critique from Hogarth to Daumier***  
**NGV International**  
**27 February – 26 July 2009**



A new exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria, *The Satirical Eye: comedy and critique from Hogarth to Daumier* will present highlights in satirical art from England, Spain and France, focusing on the period 1730–1870.

The exhibition will feature over one hundred prints and drawings from the NGV Collection. These works have been selected to highlight the role and power of satire in Europe during this period.

*The Satirical Eye* will feature works ranging from political satires which were aimed directly at prominent public figures, to scenarios that highlight fashions, fads and social manners as subjects of mockery.

Dr Petra Kayser, Assistant Curator of Prints & Drawings, NGV said: "Satire engages us through humour, and the message raises our critical awareness of current events.

"The works in this exhibition reveal much about human nature, as well as commenting on historically specific situations and individuals," said Dr Kayser.

*The Satirical Eye* will include seven works by William Hogarth which depict the chaotic underbelly life in eighteenth century London. Hogarth's narratives set the stage for the next generation of English satirists – Thomas Rowlandson, James Gillray and George Cruikshank.

Dr Gerard Vaughan, Director, NGV said: "This wonderful and engaging exhibition presents some of the greatest satirical prints of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

"The universal themes they address remain recognisable today: this art form persists in our newspapers, exposing humbug, cynicism and dishonesty, and the best satirical prints and drawings still have the power to provoke laughter and controversy. This exhibition is a 'must see' for anyone interested in politics and public life – every politician should see it," said Dr Vaughan.

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# NGV NEWS

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This exhibition will also explore satirical art in Spain and France. A highlight of the display will be a selection of prints from Francisco Goya's series, *Los Caprichos*. These superb works reveal Goya's dark vision of late eighteenth-century Spain, a society he saw to be steeped in superstition and prejudice. *Los Caprichos* was withdrawn from sale two days after publication due to Goya's fear of retaliation from the Inquisition.

In France, visual satire's greatest exponent was Honoré Daumier, whose prints were widely circulated and enormously popular in the nineteenth century, exploring the Parisian everyday life with great wit and empathy. A feature of the exhibition will be Daumier's *Le Ventre législatif* (*The legislative belly*), 1834.

*The Satirical Eye: comedy and critique from Hogarth to Daumier* will be on display at NGV International, St Kilda Road from 27 February to 26 July 2009. NGV International is open 10am–5pm, closed Tuesdays. Admission to this exhibition is free.

For further information visit [ngv.vic.gov.au](http://ngv.vic.gov.au)

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Image credit: **Thomas Rowlandson**, English 1756-1827, *A little bigger* 1790, pen and ink and watercolour over pencil, 29.8 x 27.8 cm (sheet), National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest, 1920